



## SYNOPSIS.

**CHAPTER I.**—Giles Dudley arrives in San Francisco to join his friend and distant relative Henry Wilton, whom he was to assist in an important and mysterious task, and who accompanied Dudley on the ferry boat trip into the city. The remarkable resemblance of the two men is noted and commented on by passengers on the ferry. They see a man with snake eyes, which sends a thrill through Dudley. Wilton postpones an explanation of the strange errand Dudley is to perform, but occurrences cause him to know it is one of no ordinary meaning. Wilton leaves Giles in their room, with instruction to await his return and shoot any one who tries to enter.

**CHAPTER II.**—Outside there is heard shouts and curses and the noise of a quarrel. Henry rushes in and at his request the roommates quickly exchange clothes, and he hurries out again. Henry has been gone than Giles is startled by a cry of "Help," and he runs out to find some one being assaulted by a half dozen men. He summons a policeman but they are unable to find any trace of a crime.

**CHAPTER III.**—Giles returns to his room and hunts for some evidence that might explain his strange mission. He finds a map which he endeavors to decipher. He goes to sleep and is awakened by the presence of some one in his room. They grapple and the person demands to know "where is the boy?" Four figures come to the rescue and bind and gag the intruder. Dudley is mistaken for Henry Wilton, and receives a note regarding money to be paid him.

**CHAPTER IV.**—Dudley is summoned to the morgue and there finds the dead body of his friend, Henry Wilton, who had been killed during the fight outside the building of the night before. He gives the name of James Dudley to the corpse. In order to partially carry out the disguise and to more successfully carry out the task his friend had imposed on him while living. And thus Wilton dies without ever explaining to Dudley the puzzling work he was to perform in San Francisco. Dudley describes a man with the face of a wolf as the murderer of his friend.

"Come in and sit down," he said. The voice was alert and business like—the voice of a man accustomed to command. But I could find no trace of feeling in it, nothing that could tell me of the hatred or desperate purpose that would inspire such a tragedy as I had witnessed, or warn me of danger to come.

"Do you hear?" he said impatiently; "but the door and sit down. Just saying that look, will you? We might be interrupted."

I was not at all certain that I should not wish very earnestly that he might be interrupted in what Bret Harte would call the "subsequent proceedings." But I followed his directions.

Doddridge Knapp was not less impressive at close view than at long



"YOU CAN'T DEPEND ON ME," I SAID.

range. The strong face grew stronger when seen from the near distance.

"My dear Wilton," he said, "I've come to a place where I've got to trust somebody, so I've come back to you." The voice was oily and persuasive, but the keen gray eyes shot out a glance from under the bushy eyebrows that thrilled me as a warning.

"It's very kind of you," I said, swallowing my astonishment with an effort.

"Well," said Knapp, "the way you handled that Ophir matter was perfectly satisfactory; but I'll tell you that it's on Mrs. Knapp's say-so, as much as on your own doings, that I selected you for this job."

"I'm much obliged to Mrs. Knapp," I said politely. I was in deep waters. It was plainly unsafe to do anything but drift.

"Oh, you can settle that with her at your next call," he said good humoredly.

The jaded nerves of surprise refused to respond further. If I had received a telegram informing me that the dispute over the presidency had been settled by shelving both Hayes and Tilden and giving the unanimous vote of the electors to me, I should have accepted it as a matter of course. I took my place unquestioningly as a valued acquaintance of Doddridge Knapp's and a particular friend of Mrs. Knapp's.

Yet it struck me as strange that the keen-eyed King of the Street had failed to discover that he was not talking to Henry Wilton, but to some one else who resembled him. There were enough differences in features and voice to distinguish us among intimate friends, though there were not enough to be seen by casual acquaintances. I had the key in the next sentence he spoke.

"I have decided that it is better this time to do our business face to face. I don't want to trust messengers on this affair, and even cipher notes are dangerous,—confoundedly dangerous."

Then we had not been close acquaintances.

"Oh, by the way, you have that other cipher yet, haven't you?" he asked.

"No,—burnt it," I said unblushingly.

"That's right," he said. "It was best not to take risks. Of course you understand that it won't do for us to be seen together."

"Certainly not," I assented.

"I have arranged for another office. Here's the address. Yours is Room 15. I have the key to 17, and 16 is vacant between with a 'To Let' sign on it. They open into each other. You understand?"

"Perfectly," I said.

"You will be there by nine o'clock for your orders. If you get none by twelve, there will be none for the day."

"If I can't be there, I'll let you know." I was off my guard for a moment, thinking of the possible demands of Henry's unknown employer.

"You will do nothing of the kind," said Doddridge Knapp shortly. His voice, so smooth and businesslike a moment before, changed suddenly to a growl. His heavy eyebrows came down, and from under them flashed a dangerous light. "You will be there when I tell you, young man, or you'll have to reckon with another sort of customer than the one you've been dealing with. This matter requires prompt and strict obedience to orders. One slip may ruin the whole plan."

"You can depend on me," I said with assumed confidence. "Am I to have any discretion?"

"None whatever."

I had thus far been able to get no hint of his purpose. If I had not known what I knew, I should have supposed that his mind was concentrated on the apparent object before him—to secure the zeal and fidelity of an employee in some important business operation.

"And what am I to do?" I asked.

"Be a capitalist," he said with an ironical smile. "Buy and sell what I tell you to buy and sell. Keep under cover, but not too much under cover. You can pick your own brokers. Better begin with Bockstein and Eppner, though. Your checks will be honored at the Nevada Bank. Oh, here's a cipher in case I want to write you. I suppose you'll want some ready money."

Doddridge Knapp was certainly a liberal provider, for he shoved a handful of twenty-dollar gold pieces across the desk in a way that made my eyes open.

"By the way," he continued, "I don't think I have your signature, have I?"

"No, sir," I replied with prompt confidence.

"Well, just write it on this slip then. I'll turn it into the bank for your identification. You can take the check-book with you."

"Anything more?"

"That's all," he replied with a nod of dismissal. "Maybe it's to-morrow—maybe it's next month."

And I walked out into Montgomery Street, bewildered among the conflicting mysteries in which I had been entangled.

## CHAPTER VI.

## A Night at Borton's.

Room 15 was a plain, comfortable office in a plain, comfortable building on Clay Street, not far from the heart of the business district. It was on the second floor, and its one window opened to the rear, and faced a desolate assortment of back yards, rear walls, and rickety stairways. The floor had a worn carpet, and there was a desk, a few chairs and a shelf of law books. The place looked as though it had belonged to a lawyer in reduced circumstances, and I could but wonder how it had come into the possession of Doddridge Knapp, and what had become of the former occupant.

I tried to thrust aside a spirit of melancholy, and looked narrowly to the opportunities offered by the room for attack and defense. The walls were solidly built. The window-casement showed an unusual depth for a building of that height. The wall had been put in to withstand an earthquake shock. The door opening into the hall, the door into Room 16, and the window furnished the three avenues of possible attack or retreat.

The depression of spirits that progressed with my survey of the room deepened into gloom as I flung myself into the arm-chair before the desk, and tried to plan some way out of the tangle in which I was involved. How was I, single-handed, to contend against the power of the richest man in the city, and bring home to him the murder of Henry Wilton? I could look for no assistance from the police. The words of Detective Coogan were enough to show that only the most convincing proof of guilt, backed by fear of public sentiment, could bring the department to raise a finger against him.

(To be continued.)

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2—Why pump and carry water for your kitchen and laundry work when you can have it at hand for the turning of a faucet?

3—Why take chances on drinking germ-filled cistern water when you can get it from a large reservoir filtered through the best filter plant South of the Ohio River?

4—Why have a dry, dismal-looking yard when you can have it filled with green grass and blooming flowers, and can at the same time get rid of the dust in the street?

5—Why suffer other inconveniences when you can have everything for the comfort and health of your family right in the house?

6—Is it not true that the answer is not "lack of money," but lack of economy and enterprise and indifference to getting the most out of life?

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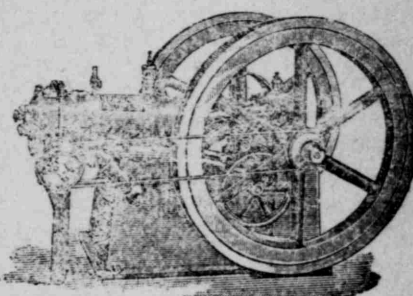
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The Points Were There.

Little Clara's parents often discuss reincarnation, and the small maiden has acquired some of the phraseology. "Mamma," she said one day, "my kith must have been a paper of pins in a previous state of existence." "Why do you think so?" asked her mother. "Because I can feel some of them in her toes yet," was the logical reply.

An Iron Tip.

Teacher—Johnny, can you tell me how iron was first discovered?

Johnny—Yes, sir.

"Well, just tell the class what your information is on that point."

"I heard pa say yesterday that they smelt it."

Women in Minority in Russia.

St. Petersburg is a good place for spinsters to migrate to, as the male population outnumbers the female 124,000, and the same proportion exists in other parts of Russia. In consequence there is quite a commerce in brides and many men in the provinces are said to make money by posing as guardians for pretty girls and selling them at good prices.

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